

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 CU-04 RSR-01 /120 W

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R 280806 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2652

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USDEL PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 3653

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR JA US

SUBJ: JAPAN AND PRG

REF TOKYO 3531

SUMMARY: AS RESULT BLUNT STATEMENT BY VICE FONMIN HOGEN THAT PRG REPS WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER JAPAN, CONTROVERSY ON THIS SUBJECT WAS REKINDLED BY OPPOSITION PARTIES MARCH 27. CABINET MINISTERS QUICKLY PAPERED OVER APPARENT DISCREPANCIES IN GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS ON SUBJECT SO THAT DIET WORK COULD RESUME. GOJ WILL CONTINUE TO DENY ENTRY TO PRG REPS. END SUMMARY.

1. ON EVENING OF MARCH 26 JUST AS CONTROVERSY OVER GOJ POLICY CONCERNING ENTRY OF PRG REPRESENTATIVES WAS SUBSIDING (REFTEL), VICE FONMIN HOGEN, AT REGULARLY SCHEDULED ON THE RECORD MEETING WITH PRESS, BLUNTLY STATED THAT IT OBVIOUS THAT IF PRG REPS WERE TO APPLY FOR ENTRY, UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, APPLICATION WOULD NOT BE APPROVED. OPPOSITION PROMPTLY REKINDLED CONTROVERSY BY SEIZING UPON APPARENT CONTRADICTION BETWEEN HOGEN' S REMARKS AND GOJ' S DECISION NOT TO FORMALLY RETRACT JUSTICE MINISTER TANAKA' S MARCH 24 DIET STATEMENT THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO APPROVE ENTRY OF PRG REPRESENTATIVES. UPPER HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARINGS WERE AGAIN SUSPENDED
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MORNING MARCH 27, BUT RESUMED IN AFTERNOON AFTER ACCEPTABLE EXPLANATION OF APPARENT DISCREPANCIES WORKED OUT BY CABINET OFFICERS.

2. FOLLOWING CABINET MEETING MORNING MARCH 27, JUSTICE MINISTER TANAKA TOLD PRESS THAT IN CONSULTATIONS WITH FONMIN OHIRA AND CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY NIKAI DO, IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT GOJ POLICY WAS BASICALLY TO APPROVE ENTRY OF PRG REPRESENTATIVES. HOWEVER, TANAKA WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN DECIDING UPON SPECIFIC APPLICATION CERTAIN PROCEDURAL MATTERS WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED, NAMELY (A) QUESTION OF APPLICANT'S PASSPORT, (B) PURPOSE OF VISIT, AND (C) DEGREE OF PROGRESS BEING MADE IN PARIS TALKS BETWEEN TWO VIETNAMESE PARTIES. (NIKAI DO HAD EARLIER EXPLAINED REFERENCE TO PARIS DISCUSSIONS BY SAYING THAT AS GOJ POLICY WAS TO PROVIDE AID TO SVN AS WHOLE, IF INDIVIDUAL APPLIED REPRESENTING PRG, HIS ENTRY WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE APPROVED BECAUSE HE DID NOT REPRESENT WHOLE OF SVN, BUT THAT IF HE CAME REPRESENTING NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NATIONAL CONCORD AND RECONCILIATION, HE WOULD PROBABLY BE APPROVED. HENCE, PROGRESS AT PARIS TALKS RELEVANT.) TANAKA ADDED THAT HIS EXPRESSION IN DIET OF WILLINGNESS TO APPROVE ENTRY CONCERNED ONLY PRG DEP REP IN PARIS NGUYEN VAN THIEN.

3. IN ADDITION, PRESS HAS REPORTED THAT FONMIN OHIRA CALLED VICE FONMIN HOGEN TO OHIRA'S OFFICE IN DIET AND VERBALLY ADMINISTERED SEVERE WARNING TO HIM CONCERNING SUCH STATEMENTS. ON EVENING OF MARCH 27, HOGEN MET PRESS AGAIN AND APOLOGIZED FOR MISUNDERSTANDING CREATED BY HIS EARLIER REMARKS.

4. COMMENT: GOJ HAS SIMULTANEOUSLY MAINTAINED POLICY OF REFUSING ENTRY TO PRG REPRESENTATIVES AND AVOIDED NECESSITY OF FORMALLY RETRACTING JUSTICE MINISTER TANAKA'S MARCH 24 DIET STATEMENT BY NOTING THAT VARIETY OF CONDITIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE MET BEFORE ENTRY WOULD BE APPROVED. GOJ HANDLED CONTROVERSY WITH CONSIDERABLE EASE, DUE TO OPPOSITION'S DISINCLINATION TO PRESS ISSUE TOO FAR. HOWEVER, AS LATEST IN SERIES OF DIET FLUBS, EPISODE HAS NOT ENHANCED CONFIDENCE IN CABINET'S ABILITY TO HANDLE DIET PROBLEMS SKILLFULLY.

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